U.S. Department of the Interior
Bureau of Land Management
White River Field Office
73544 Hwy 64
Meeker, CO 81641

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

NUMBER: CO-110-2004-081 -EA

CASEFILE/PROJECT NUMBER (optional): Grazing Record #0501523

PROJECT NAME: Raley R. Allotment Lease Renewal (Allotment #06823)

LEGAL DESCRIPTION: T2S, R93W, Section 14

APPLICANT: Rob Raley

ISSUES AND CONCERNS (optional): Potential Lynx Habitat

DESCRIPTION OF PROPOSED ACTION AND ALTERNATIVES:

Background/Introduction:

Allotment #	Allotment Name	Public Land Acreage	Private Land Acreage
#06823	Raley R.	120	260

Proposed Action (Continuation of Current Management): This alternative will provide for the renewal of the lease with no changes made in livestock numbers, season of use, and type of use on the allotment. The following table shows the total acreage by ownership.

Allotment #	#/Kind	Grazing Period	% Federal Range	Type Use	AUMs
#06823	30/Cattle	May 1 to October 26	17	Active	30

In the most recent land use plan, White River Resource Management Plan (RMP), July, 1997, this allotment was categorized a custodial allotment. This allotment was categorized as custodial because of the small public land acreage involved and the lack of any identified resource conflicts in the RMP. The allotment would continue to be categorized as a custodial allotment.

The following terms and conditions as required by 43 CFR 4130.3 will be included in the renewal of the grazing lease:

- Any changes in grazing use must be applied for prior to the grazing period.

- Each year billing notices are issued with specify, for the current year, the allotment number and kind of livestock, period of use, animal unit months of use, and the grazing fees due. These billing notices when paid become a part of this grazing lease.
- Grazing fees are due upon issuance of a billing notice and must be paid in full prior to making any grazing use under this grazing lease, unless otherwise provided for in the terms and conditions of this grazing lease.
- No grazing use can be authorized under this grazing lease during any period of delinquency in the payment of amounts due in settlement for unauthorized grazing use.
- Grazing use authorized this grazing lease may be suspended, in whole or in part, for violation by the permittee/lessee of any of the provisions of the rules or regulations not or thereafter approved by the Secretary of the Interior.
- This grazing lease is subject to cancellation, in whole or in part, at any time because of: a) Noncompliance by the permittee/lessee with rules and regulations now or hereafter approved by the Secretary of the Interior. b) Loss of control by the permittee/lessee of all or a part of the property upon which it is based. c) A transfer of grazing preference by the permittee/lessee to another party. d) A decrease in the lands administered by the Bureau of Land Management within the allotment described herein. e) Repeated willful unauthorized grazing use.
- This grazing lease is subject to the provisions of Executive Order #11246 of September 24, 1965, as amended, which sets forth nondiscrimination clauses. A copy of this order may be obtained from the authorized officer.
- The permittee/lessee must own or control and be responsible for the management of the livestock authorized to graze under this grazing lease.
- The authorized officer may require counting and/or additional or special marking or tagging of the livestock authorized to graze under this lease.
- The permittees/lessee's grazing case file is available for public inspection as required by the Freedom of Information Act.
- In order to improve livestock distribution on the public lands, all salt blocks and/or mineral supplements will not be placed within a ¼ mile of any riparian area, wet meadow, or watering facility (either permanent or temporary) unless stipulated through a written agreement or decision in accordance with 43 CFR 4130.3-2(c).
- In accordance with 43 CFR 4130.8-1(F): Failure to pay grazing bills within 15 days of the due date specified in the bill shall result in a late fee assessment of $25.00 or 10 percent of the grazing bill, whichever is greater, but not to exceed $250.00. Payment made later than 15 days after the due date, shall include the appropriate late fee assessment. Failure to make payment within 30 days may be a violation of 43 CFR 4140.1(b) (1) and shall result in action by the authorized officer under 43 CFR Secs 4150.1 and 4160.1-2.

No Action Alternative (No Grazing): The no action or no grazing alternative consists of not issuing a grazing lease for livestock use. There would be no livestock grazing on public lands within the allotment on which it is currently permitted. This alternative will not be in compliance with the RMP decision to provide for livestock grazing as an acceptable multiple use. Also, this action could result in: 1) loss of the capacity for any range improvement maintenance; 2) loss of livestock as tool to manage vegetation for the benefit of wildlife and other resources, and 3) significant negative economic impact to the grazing permittee if he could not use BLM lands which are contiguous to his private lands.

NEED FOR THE ACTION: BLM lease #0501523 which authorizes livestock grazing on allotment #06823, Raley R. Allotment, expired on February 28, 2004 but was renewed in accordance with Section 325, Title III, H.R. 2691, Department of the Interior Appropriations Act, 2004 (P.L. 108-108). This lease is subject to renewal or transfer at the discretion of the Secretary of the Interior for a period of up to ten years. The Bureau of Land Management has the authority to renew the livestock grazing lease consistent with the provisions of the *Taylor Grazing Act, Public Rangelands Improvement Act, Federal Land Policy and Management Act, and White River Resource Area Resource Management Plan/Environmental Impact Statement*. This Plan/EIS has included the *Standards for Public Land Health in Colorado.*

PLAN CONFORMANCE REVIEW: The Proposed Action is subject to and has been reviewed for conformance with the following plan (43 CFR 1610.5, BLM 1617.3):

Name of Plan: White River Record of Decision and Approved Resource Management Plan (Record of Decision/Resource Management Plan).

Date Approved: July 1, 1997

Decision Number/Page: 2-10, 2-22 through 2-26

Decision Language: The Proposed Action implements the White River RMP Livestock Grazing Management objective on page 2-22 to 2-26:

- to maintain or enhance a healthy rangeland vegetation composition and species diversity, capable of supplying forage at a sustained yield to meet the demand for livestock grazing, and

- to provide for adequate forage plant growth and/or regrowth opportunity necessary to: 1) replenish the plants food reserves; and 2) produce sufficient seed to meet the reproduction needs necessary to maintain an ecological presence in the plant community. This objective will be accomplished by implementing a grazing system.

Also as stated on page 2-10, the goal of the livestock management program is to improve the rangeland forage resource by managing toward a desired plant community. "In the future, allotment categorization, levels of management, and permit modifications could be made if additional information suggests that this is warranted in

The proposed action has been reviewed for conformance with this plan (43 CFR 1610.5, BLM 1617.3). The action conforms with the decisions/pages of the plan listed above.

AFFECTED ENVIRONMENT / ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES / MITIGATION MEASURES:

STANDARDS FOR PUBLIC LAND HEALTH: In January 1997, Colorado Bureau of Land Management (BLM) approved the Standards for Public Land Health. These standards cover upland soils, riparian systems, plant and animal communities, threatened and endangered species, and water quality. Standards describe conditions needed to sustain public land health and relate to all uses of the public lands. Because a standard exists for these five categories, a finding must be made for each of them in an environmental analysis. These findings are located in specific elements listed below:

CRITICAL ELEMENTS

CULTURAL RESOURCES

Affected Environment: The allotment is 30 per cent plus slope. No Rock Art is visible.

Environmental Consequences of the Proposed Action (Continuation of Current Management): None.

Environmental Consequences of the No Action Alternative (No Grazing): No impacts

Mitigation: If historic or archaeological materials are uncovered by the permittee, the permittee is to immediately stop activities in the immediate area of the find that might further disturb such materials, and immediately contact the BLM.

INVASIVE, NON-NATIVE SPECIES

Affected Environment: Noxious weeds of concern include houndstongue, Canada, Bull and Musk thistle, and yellow toadflax. It is not known if the lease holder has an active weed control program.

Environmental Consequences of the Proposed Action (Continuation of Current Management): The above described noxious weeds are a problem in the area, and if treated would maintain the native plant communities composition and productivity.

Environmental Consequences of the No Action Alternative: No impacts

Mitigation: From the White River ROD/RMP, Appendix B, #179. Application of herbicides must be under field supervision of an EPA-certified pesticide applicator. Herbicides must be registered by the EPA and application proposals must be approved by the BLM.

MIGRATORY BIRDS

Affected Environment: The allotment is situated on a steep, north facing slope which is dominated by an early-mature Douglas-fir forest. Engelmann spruce and subalpine fir make up the eastern slope of the allotment. Mountain shrub and aspen are most common along the ridge top and upper portion of the southeastern slope, although they do appear at low densities

throughout the allotment. These habitat types typically provide nesting habitat for a large array of migratory birds during the summer months (May, June and July). Species having a higher conservation interest such as blue grouse, Virginia's warbler, green-tailed towhee, olive-sided flycatcher and Hammond's flycatcher are often found in these habitat types. Blue grouse were observed during a March field visit.

Environmental Consequences of the Proposed Action (Continuation of Current Management): This action is not expected to reduce the extent or quality of habitat available for migratory bird breeding functions. There is little to no evidence of use by livestock on the BLM portion of the allotment. The proposed action would not affect winter use by blue grouse as grazing takes place during the summer months.

Environmental Consequences of the No Action Alternative (No Grazing): This alternative would not have any effect on the abundance and distribution of migratory birds within the allotment.

Mitigation: None

THREATENED, ENDANGERED, AND SENSITIVE ANIMAL SPECIES (includes a finding on Standard 4)

Affected Environment: The north aspect, which makes up approximately 60% of the BLM parcel within the allotment, is comprised mainly of a closed-canopy, early-mature Douglas-fir stand interspersed with small (<1 ac) aspen pockets. Subalpine fir is interspersed at low densities among Douglas-fir. Understory vegetation along the north aspect is generally sparce and is mainly herbaceous growth with scattered snowberry, Gambel oak and serviceberry, particularly near the ridge top. Bare ground and litter are the primary components of the forest floor. Small to medium-sized (7-11 in) woody debris is abundant within drainages and is scattered across the north aspect of the allotment at low to moderate densities. The north aspect has a relatively steep slope (approximately 45%) and an elevation range of 7600 – 8400 ft.

The eastern aspect makes up approximately 25% of the parcel. It is comprised of a mixed Engelmann spruce, subalpine fir and Douglas-fir forest. The east slope is quite steep (approximately 60%). Aspen are scattered throughout the lower slope and along Sykes Gulch which borders the east side of the allotment. Colorado blue spruce is found in drainages and along Sykes Gulch. Ground and shrub cover, which is represented at moderate to high densities along the eastern slope, consists mainly of snowberry, Oregon grape and Gambel oak. Small diameter (7 in) downfall is abundant in drainages along the lower portions of the eastern slope. The ridge along the southern boundary makes up <10% of the allotment and consists mainly of aspen interspersed with mountain shrub species.

There is no indication that Canada lynx inhabit or make important use of this allotment. The majority of this allotment is designated as potential Canada lynx denning habitat by the U.S. Forest Service (USFS), however, field inspections by a BLM biologist indicate the habitat to be less than adequate for denning purposes. Although there were substantial amounts of small downfall scattered throughout the allotment, large woody debris, a key component to lynx

denning habitat was absent. The allotment could be considered opportunistic winter foraging habitat as there appears to be an adequate prey base to support Canada lynx. Snowshoe hare, red squirrel and blue grouse sign were common

While the allotment may have the potential to be utilized by lynx for opportunistic foraging or movement/dispersal, it is unlikely that this small tract of land could support an individual animal for extended periods of time. The steepness of the slope and lack of midslope benches likely deters use as lynx tend to make lesser use of steep slopes. Coniferous regeneration, an important habitat component of lynxs' principal prey, snowshoe hare is limited throughout the parcel. In addition, the parcel lies at the lower elevational range of preferred lynx habitat in Colorado (8400 ft). The majority of the land adjacent to the allotment has been classified as unsuitable habitat for by the USFS. Based on this mapping, suitable habitat, whether it be denning, winter or other, is not contiguous at the landscape level in this area. All these factors coalesce to make the habitat less than optimal for use by Canada lynx.

Environmental Consequences of the Proposed Action (Continuation of Current Management) The proposed action is not likely to adversely affect the short or long term utility or suitability of lynx habitat. The capability of the BLM parcel to provide optimal lynx habitat is constrained by its predominantly steep slopes and an early-mature forest. Current livestock grazing use has no influence on habitat capability nor is it an impediment to the potential development of habitat characteristics that are important to lynx and associated prey species. The BLM parcel, with few exceptions, is comprised of very steep, conifer-dominated slopes with characteristically sparse understory development. These factors are apparently responsible for the light or incidental livestock use made on the vast majority of BLM parcel within the allotment. Aspen regeneration, quickly depleted under inappropriate grazing regimens, was evident along Sykes Gulch and throughout the allotment in interspersed aspen pockets. Riparian vegetation, only partially protected by fencing, and herbaceous ground cover beneath extensive conifer and aspen canopies exhibited only light, if any, use by livestock through the summer and fall months.

Environmental Consequences of the No Action Alternative (No Grazing): The absence of any grazing would be expected to have no impacts to threatened and endangered wildlife.

Mitigation: Any conservation measures that are developed under the US Fish and Wildlife Service Informal Section 7 Consultation will be incorporated into the proposed action.

Finding on the Public Land Health Standard for Threatened & Endangered species: There is no reasonable likelihood that the proposed action or no action alternative would have an influence on the condition or function of Threatened, Endangered, or Sensitive animal species habitat. Thus there would be no effect on achieving the land health standard. BLM parcels within this allotment currently meet the Public Land Health standard for special status species. Livestock use, as presently authorized, appears fully consistent with the maintenance and continued development of those habitat features important to lynx, including: continued maturation of conifers (production of large downfall material as denning cover) and the maintenance of herbaceous and woody understory components and aspen/conifer reproduction (cover and forage for prime and alternate prey—snowshoe hare, blue grouse, red squirrel). The

no action alternative would also meet the Public Land Health standard for special status species, but would provide no apparent advantage in enhancing the condition of lynx habitat.

WASTES, HAZARDOUS OR SOLID

Affected Environment: Hazardous or solid wastes are not expected to be a part of the affected environment. However, these materials my accidentally be introduced in the environment through the implementation of the proposed action. Fuel, oil, grease, and antifreeze are all associated with vehicles associated with implementing the proposed action and would only be introduced into the environment because of equipment failure. Minute loss of these materials through normal operation of equipment, maintenance and fueling procedures are not considered spills. Spills are generally defined as the loss of large quantities of these materials into the environment and are determined to be a spill on a case-by-case basis.

Environmental Consequences of the Proposed Action (Continuation of Current Management): For any given accident or incident involving hazardous materials, consequences will be dependent on the volume and nature of the incident and material released. Short term impacts such as contaminations of soils, vegetation, and surface water could occur.

Environmental Consequences of the No Action Alternative (No Grazing): No hazardous wastes would be introduced into the environment under the no action alternative.

Mitigation: The permittee shall be required to collect and properly dispose of any solid wastes generated by the proposed action.

WATER QUALITY, SURFACE AND GROUND (includes a finding on Standard 5)

Affected Environment: The proposed action is in the West Miller Creek watershed which is tributary to Miller Creek and the White River. A review of the Colorado's 1989 Nonpoint Source Assessment Report (plus updates), the 305(b) report, the 303(d) list and the Unified Watershed Assessment was one to see if any water quality concerns have been identified. The State has classified this stream segment as Cold Aquatic Life 1, Recreation 1b, Water Supply and Agriculture. The state has further defined water quality parameters with table values. These standards reflect the ambient water quality and define maximum allowable concentrations for various water quality parameters. The anti-degradation rule applies to this segment meaning no further water quality degradation is allowable that would interfere with or become harmful to the designated uses.

Environmental Consequences of the Proposed Action (Continuation of Current Management): Because the location of this allotment is primarily on a steep hillside, use from livestock is limited. Currently, the upland watershed handles the pressure from livestock.

Environmental Consequences of the No Action Alternative (No Grazing): Impacts from the no grazing alternative are not expected to be any different from the proposed action since the use is so limited.

Mitigation: No additional mitigation.

Finding on the Public Land Health Standard for water quality: The water quality of West Miller Creek currently meets the State Standards and will continue to do so as a result of the proposed action.

WETLANDS AND RIPARIAN ZONES (includes a finding on Standard 2)

Affected Environment: During inspections dated March 12, March 18, July 20, and September 1, 2004 the only known wetland and/or riparian zone identified was located in the Sykes Gulch drainage, approximately 200 feet in length, partially located on the public lands within this allotment in what would be the most SE corner of the allotment. The riparian area is fenced although all of the fences are in need of maintenance and/or repairs. There was no apparent recent use of the wetland/riparian area by cattle.

Environmental Consequences of the Proposed Action (Continuation of Current Management): Under the current management, this relatively small section of wetland/riparian area shows little cattle use. Under the proposed action the only time the wetland/riparian zone would become susceptible to not meeting the standard was if water became limited to this area only.

Environmental Consequences of the No Action Alternative (No Grazing): The wetland/riparian area would continue in proper functioning condition.

Mitigation: Fences will be required to be maintained in a functioning condition.

Finding on the Public Land Health Standard for riparian systems: The proposed action and no action alternatives, along with the size and location of the area, currently have little influence on this wetland/riparian area habitat meeting the Public Land Health Standard.

CRITICAL ELEMENTS NOT PRESENT OR NOT AFFECTED:

No ACEC's, flood plains, prime and unique farmlands, Wilderness, or Wild and Scenic Rivers, threatened, endangered or sensitive plants exist within the area affected by the proposed action. For threatened, endangered and sensitive plant species Public Land Health Standard is not applicable since neither the proposed nor the no-action alternative would have any influence on populations of, or habitats potentially occupied by, special status plants. There are also no Air Quality, Native American religious or environmental justice concerns associated with the proposed action.

NON-CRITICAL ELEMENTS

The following elements **must** be addressed due to the involvement of Standards for Public Land Health:

SOILS (includes a finding on Standard 1)

Affected Environment: The soils have been mapped in an order III soil survey by Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) and are available from the White River Field Office for review. Refer to the table below for the type of soils affected by the proposed action.

Soil Number	Soil Name	Soil pH	Permeability	Water Capacity	Runoff	Erosion Potential	Range site	Slope
26	Cowdrey-Tampico loams	6.1-6.5	0.6-2.0	0.15-0.17	Medium	Very high	Douglas & Spruce Fir Woodlands/ Brushy Loam	15-50%
80	Shawa loam	6.6-7.8	0.6-2.0	0.14-.016	Medium	Moderate to slight	Deep Loam	3-8%
88	Tampico-Miracle complex	5.6-7.3	0.6-2.0	0.16-0.18	Medium	Moderate to very high	Brushy Loam/Mountain Loam	8-50%

The majority of the soils are soil mapping unit number 26. This map unit is on mountainsides and toe slopes. The native vegetation is mainly coniferous forest and brush. This unit is 60 percent Cowdrey loam that has slopes of 30 to 50 percent and 30 percent Tampico loam that has slopes of 15 to 50 percent. The Cowdrey soil is deep and well drained. The surface layer is dark grayish brown loam 4 inches thick. The subsurface layer is pale brown loam 8 inches thick. The next layer is pale brown and pinkish gray loam 4 inches thick. The subsoil is light brown cobbly clay 18 inches thick. The substratum to a depth of 60 inches or more is light brown cobbly clay. The rock fragments are angular. Permeability of the Cowdrey soil is slow. Available water capacity is high. Effective rooting depth is 60 inches or more. Runoff is medium, and the hazard of water erosion is very high.

The Tampico soil is deep and well drained. It formed in colluvium derived dominantly from interbedded red-bed sandstone and shale. Typically, the surface is covered with a mat of partially decomposed leaves and twigs 3 inches thick. The upper part of the surface layer is dark reddish gray loam about 11 inches thick, and the lower part is reddish gray loam about 4 inches thick. The upper 15 inches of the subsoil is reddish brown loam, and the lower 12 inches is reddish brown clay loam. The substratum to a depth of 60 inches or more is reddish brown cobbly clay loam. The rock fragments are angular. Permeability of the Tampico soil is moderate. Available water capacity is high. Effective rooting depth is 60 inches or more. Runoff is medium, and the hazard of water erosion is high to very high.

Slope limits access by livestock and results in overgrazing of the less sloping areas. If the range is overgrazed, the proportion of preferred forage plants decreases and the proportion of less

preferred forage plants increases. Therefore, livestock grazing should be managed so that the desired balance of preferred species is maintained in the plant community. Management practices suitable for use on this unit are proper range use, deferred grazing, rotation grazing, and brush management. The unit is poorly suited to rangeland seeding. It is limited mainly by slope in the steeper areas.

Environmental Consequences of the Proposed Action (Continuation of Current Management): Because of the steepness of slope, livestock do not use this allotment extensively. What use the allotment does get the soil conditions are able to reestablish in a timely manner.

Environmental Consequences of the No Action Alternative (No Grazing): Under the no grazing alternative there would be an increase in surface litter, canopy cover and ground cover on some sites over the short term. This change would occur at a slightly faster rate than under the continuation of current management.

Mitigation: None

Finding on the Public Land Health Standard for upland soils: Soils are currently meeting the Public Land Health Standard for upland soils and would continue to meet the standard with the implementation of the proposed action.

VEGETATION (includes a finding on Standard 3)

Affected Environment: The BLM parcel in the allotment is composed primarily of a mature Douglas fir on the north facing slope, and Engelmann spruce and subalpine fir on the east facing slope with minor inclusions of chokecherry, serviceberry, snowberry, and aspen woodlands. The understory components and plant communities associated with this type of canopy cover, in general, is a developed grass-forb understory, along with good residual and litter throughout the federal acreage.

Environmental Consequences of the Proposed Action (Continuation of Current Management): All of the range sites within the allotment represent plant communities within acceptable thresholds for healthy communities and within acceptable levels of a desired plant community as defined in the White River ROD/RMP. Vegetation production and species composition on these sites provided adequate cover for soil protection and forage production to meet forage demands. These communities meet or exceed the Colorado Public Land Health Standards. The grazing use currently authorized for the allotment is expected to maintain the current rangeland condition but is not likely to change the current seral rating of these range sites.

Environmental Consequences of the No Action Alternative (No Grazing): The no grazing alternative is expected to maintain the current rangeland condition and seral range site ratings.

Mitigation: None

Finding on the Public Land Health Standard for plant and animal communities (partial, see also Wildlife, Aquatic and Wildlife, Terrestrial)*:* The vegetation currently meets the Public Land Health Standards and would continue to do so with the implementation of the proposed action.

WILDLIFE, AQUATIC (includes a finding on Standard 3)

Affected Environment: The only aquatic habitat on the allotment is supported by Sykes Gulch, a small perennial drainage traversing about 200 feet of Public Land on the southeastern portion of the allotment. This drainage has been fenced off and, though in need of maintenance, appears to effectively deter substantive livestock use. The creek supports a simple invertebrate-based aquatic community. Higher order vertebrate forms are not associated with this creek.

Environmental Consequences of the Proposed Action (Continuation of Current Management): Based on current channel and vegetation conditions in Sykes Gulch, continuation of the current grazing regimen would have no adverse impact on aquatic wildlife. A number of field inspections during the summer and fall of 2004 showed no recent or historical evidence that livestock have had any substantive influence on riparian or channel conditions in this drainage.

Environmental Consequences of the No Action Alternative (No Grazing): This alternative would have no potential to affect aquatic wildlife or habitat within the allotment.

Mitigation: None refer to "Wetland and Riparian Zones" section.

Finding on the Public Land Health Standard for plant and animal communities (partial, see also Vegetation and Wildlife, Terrestrial): That portion of Sykes Gulch within the Raley allotment currently meets the Public Land Health standards for riparian vegetation and animal and plant communities. Authorizing grazing use as specified in the proposed action would have no impact on aquatic wildlife or habitat and, therefore, would be consistent with continued meeting of applicable Public Land Health standards.

WILDLIFE, TERRESTRIAL (includes a finding on Standard 3)

Affected Environment: The north-facing slope of the allotment consists predominantly of an early-mature Douglas-fir stand with aspen scattered throughout. Engelmann spruce, subalpine fir and Douglas-fir comprise the eastern slope of the allotment. Aspen is most common along the drainage and along the southeastern slope. These forests commonly provide nesting habitat for raptor species such as Cooper's hawk, sharp-shinned hawk and red-tailed hawk. A pair of red-tailed hawks was observed on 18 March 2004 however, no nests were located on the allotment. The mixed conifer forests located within the allotment are occupied by elk during the winter months (October – April). These same forests also provide habitat for deer during the summer months (May – September).

Environmental Consequences of the Proposed Action (Continuation of Current Management): Recent use by livestock was not apparent based on field visits between March and

September. Because light to incidental use of the BLM parcel by livestock has no substantive effect on vegetation expression or ecological processes, the proposed action would have no conceivable influence on the continued availability of raptor nest substrate or the abundance or diversity of potential avian or mammalian prey. Cattle may use an established road which runs along the eastern portion of the allotment; however this would have no influence on nesting success of raptors. In addition, the proposed action would have little influence on the extent or availability of big game forage or cover resources.

Environmental Consequences of the No Action Alternative (No Grazing): This alternative would have no effect on terrestrial wildlife or habitat.

Mitigation: None

Finding on the Public Land Health Standard for plant and animal communities (partial, see also Vegetation and Wildlife, Aquatic): The BLM parcel within this allotment currently meets the public land health standard for terrestrial animal communities. As discussed in the environmental consequences sections above, the proposed and no action alternatives would have no influence on the continued meeting of the public land health standards for terrestrial animal communities.

OTHER NON-CRITICAL ELEMENTS: For the following elements, only those brought forward for analysis will be addressed further.

Non-Critical Element	NA or Not Present	Applicable or Present, No Impact	Applicable & Present and Brought Forward for Analysis
Access and Transportation		X	
Cadastral Survey	X		
Fire Management	X		
Forest Management		X	
Geology and Minerals	X		
Hydrology/Water Rights	X		
Law Enforcement		X	
Paleontology	X		
Rangeland Management			X
Realty Authorizations	X		
Recreation		X	
Socio-Economics		X	
Visual Resources		X	
Wild Horses	X		

RANGELAND MANAGEMENT

The vegetation and woodland types on public land described by range sites are as follows:

Range Site	Vegetation Type(s)
Brushy Loam	Serviceberry, oakbrush, snowberry, nodding brome, elk sedge, slender wheatgrass, western wheatgrass, Letterman and Columbia needlegrasses
Mountain Loam	Nodding brome, slender wheatgrass, bearded wheatgrass, Letterman and Columbia needlegrass, snowberry, serviceberry
Deep Loam	Needle-and-threadgrass, western wheatgrass, junegrass, bluebunch wheatgrass, Indian ricegrass
Woodlands	Engelmann Spruce, Douglas Fir, Aspen

Affected Environment: The Raley R. Allotment is made up of one pasture. Within the table below, acreage is broken down by land status, and AUMs as outlined under the proposed action are shown:

Allotment	Ownership	Acres	Livestock AUMs
Raley R.	BLM	120	30
	Private	260	145
	Total	380	175

The federal range portion of the allotment is situated on a steep slope (>30%) with the major range site component being a woodland forest mixture of Engelmann Spruce and Douglas Fir along with a few isolated pockets of aspen. The understory mixture, as noted in the above table, is currently in a highly productive state and composed of a late seral rating for all vegetation classes. Due to the low use over the past few years by livestock, the weed management taking place by the operator, and the topography of the federal range this allotment will most likely exceed the Colorado Public Land Health Standards.

Environmental Consequences of the Proposed Action (Continuation of Current Management): The amount of cattle use is reduced proportionate to the amount of lands suitable for cattle distribution, plant communities, and use levels by cattle in recent grazing years. A significant portion of the federal lands contain steep slopes, which are not suited for cattle use. Cattle have a tendency to congregate along level places, thus lessening their utilization of steep slopes. Therefore cattle use will be concentrated in the drainage bottoms and the gentler slopes, mostly private land.

The current grazing management will continue to provide the plant communities within the Raley R. Allotment adequate opportunity for regrowth and seed production following grazing. Based on past grazing patterns and use, the grazing time frames only include part of the growing season therefore, plants will have time for growth and/or regrowth to reach maturity for the increased level of plant vigor which was recently noted during all of the allotment inspections.

Environmental Consequences of the No Action Alternative (No Grazing): Under this alternative, livestock grazing use would not be permitted on public lands. Plant communities would experience a slight increase in percent ground cover. However, the forage components on public lands within the allotment are in a minority position (17%) in relation to private lands (83%). Grazing would likely continue on the private lands within the boundaries of the

allotment, which would require fencing off of BLM lands. The additional amount of fencing would be cumbersome in respects to costs and resource impacts such as wildlife movement.

The applicant would experience a negative economic impact as they are dependent upon public land grazing in their livestock operation. When permitted livestock are on public lands, the permittee/lessee can conserve forage on other lands to meet future livestock requirements. Livestock producers are dependent on this permitted grazing use on public lands to ensure the economic viability of his/her ranching operation

Mitigation: The BLM will continue to make allotment inspections, as deemed necessary, to monitor cattle use to determine any potential adverse impacts to other resource values. If any concerns arise from cattle use, BLM and the permittee will implement appropriate mitigation measures to ensure future rangeland health standards and guidelines are continued to be met.

CUMULATIVE IMPACTS SUMMARY: Cumulative impacts associated with livestock grazing were analyzed in the resource management plan for the White River. Also, the wildlife sections in this environmental assessment address cumulative impacts of grazing by livestock and wildlife.

PERSONS / AGENCIES CONSULTED: The White River Field Office sent scoping letters to the following groups and agencies: Craig District Board of Grazing Advisors and the Northwest Resource Advisory Council. A Public Notice of the NEPA action is posted on the White River Field Office Internet website at the Colorado BLM Home Page asking for public input on lease renewals and the assessment of public land health standards within the White River Field Office area. Local notification is published in the Rio Blanco Herald Times newspaper located here in Meeker, Colorado on a monthly basis. Individual letters are sent to the lessees/permittees informing them that their lease is up for renewal and request any information they want included in or taken into consideration during the renewal process.

INTERDISCIPLINARY REVIEW:

Name	Title	Area of Responsibility
Carol Hollowed	Hydrologist	Air Quality
Tamara Meagley	NRS	Areas of Critical Environmental Concern
Tamara Meagley	NRS	Threatened and Endangered Plant Species
Gabrielle Elliott	Archaeologist	Cultural Resources Paleontological Resources
Robert Fowler	Forester	Invasive, Non-Native Species
Lisa Belmonte	Wildlife Biologist	Migratory Birds
Lisa Belmonte	Wildlife Biologist	Threatened, Endangered and Sensitive Animal

Name	Title	Area of Responsibility
		Species, Wildlife
Marty O'Mara	Hazmat collateral	Wastes, Hazardous or Solid
Carol Hollowed	P & EC	Water Quality, Surface and Ground Hydrology and Water Rights
Melissa Kindall	Range Technician	Wetlands and Riparian Zones
Chris Ham	ORP	Wilderness
Carol Hollowed	P & EC	Soils
Melissa Kindall	Range Technician	Vegetation
Lisa Belmonte	Wildlife Biologist	Wildlife Terrestrial and Aquatic
Chris Ham	ORP	Access and Transportation
Ken Holsinger	Fire Ecologist	Fire Management
Robert Fowler	Forester	Forest Management
Paul Daggett	Mining Engineer	Geology and Minerals
Melissa Kindall	Range Technician	Rangeland Management
Penny Brown	Realty Specialist	Realty Authorizations
Chris Ham	ORP	Recreation
Chris Ham	ORP	Visual Resources

Finding of No Significant Impact/Decision Record (FONSI/DR)

CO-110-2004-081-EA

FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT (FONSI)/RATIONALE: The environmental assessment and analyzing the environmental effects of the proposed action have been reviewed. The approved mitigation measures (listed below) result in a Finding of No Significant Impact on the human environment. Therefore, an environmental impact statement is not necessary to further analyze the environmental effects of the proposed action.

DECISION/RATIONALE: It is my decision to renew Grazing Lease #0501523 as described by the proposed action, with the mitigation measures listed below. This action is in compliance with decisions in the White River ROD/RMP and environmental impacts are expected to be minimal.

MITIGATION MEASURES:

1. If historic or archaeological materials are uncovered by the Permittee the Permittee is to immediately stop activities in the immediate area of the find that might further disturb such materials, and immediately contact the BLM.

2. Application of herbicides must be under field supervision of an EPA-certified pesticide applicator. Herbicides must be registered by the EPA and application proposals must be approved by the BLM.

3. Any conservation measures that are developed under the US Fish and Wildlife Service Informal Section 7 Consultation will be incorporated into the proposed action.

4. Fences are required to be maintained in a functioning condition.

5. The permittee shall be required to collect and properly dispose of any solid wastes generated by the proposed action.

COMPLIANCE/MONITORING: The BLM will continue to make allotment inspections, as deemed necessary, to monitor cattle use and determine any potential adverse impacts to other resource values. BLM and the permittee will implement appropriate mitigation measures to ensure future rangeland health standards and guidelines continue to be met.

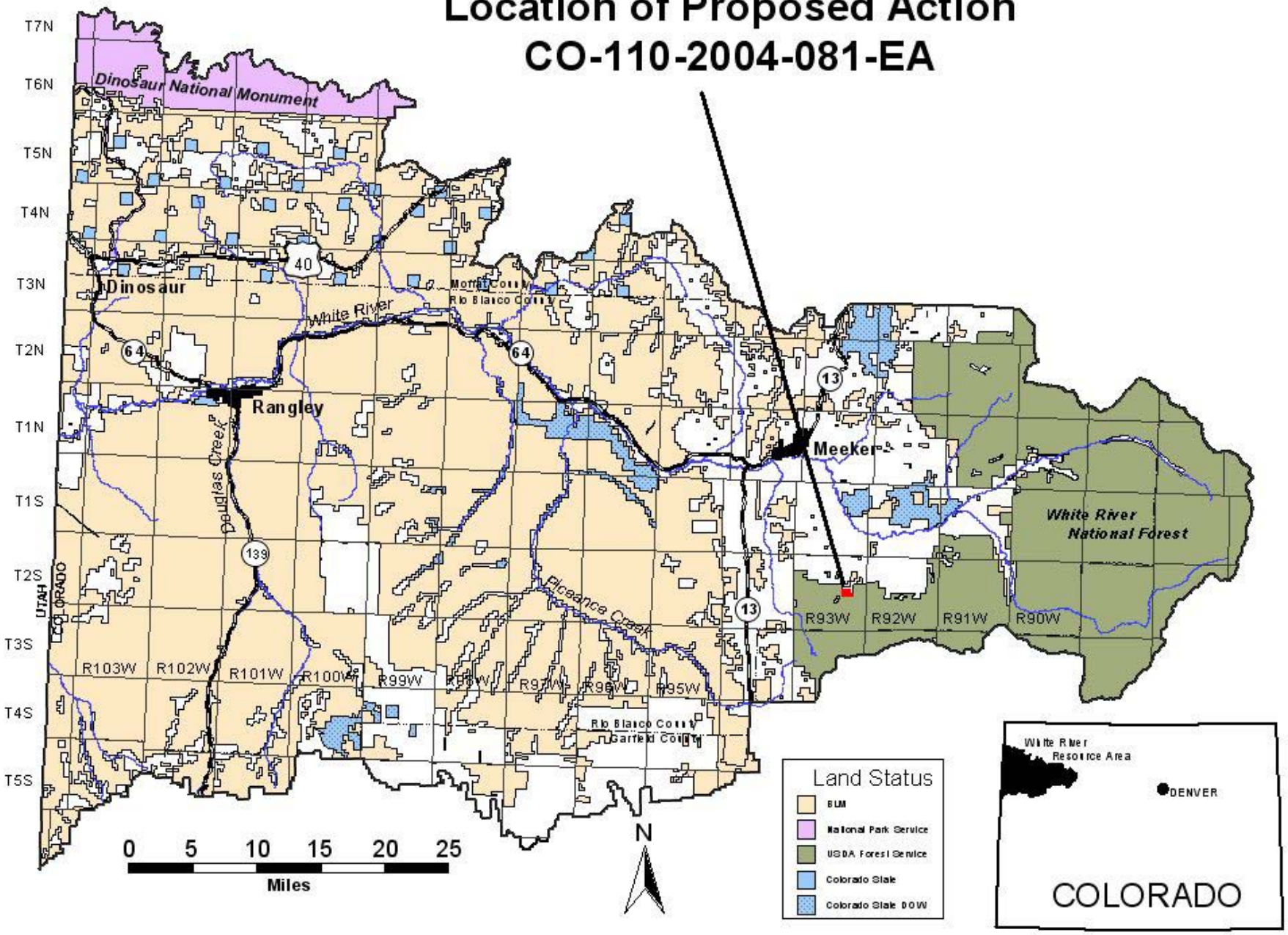
NAME OF PREPARER: Melissa J. Kindall, Ranch Technician

NAME OF ENVIRONMENTAL COORDINATOR: Caroline P. Hollowed 10/1/04

SIGNATURE OF AUTHORIZED OFFICIAL: Kent E. Walter
Field Manager

DATE SIGNED: 10/01/04

ATTACHMENTS: Location map of the proposed action.


Location of Proposed Action
CO-110-2004-081-EA
T7N
T6N
T5N
T4N
T3N
T2N
T1N
T1S
T2S
T3S
T4S
T5S
Dinosaur National Monument
Dinosaur
Rangley
Meeker
White River
Douglas Creek
Piceance Creek
UTAH
COLORADO
Moffat County
Rio Blanco County
Garfield County
40
64
13
139
White River National Forest
R103W
R102W
R101W
R100W
R99W
R98W
R97W
R96W
R95W
R93W
R92W
R91W
R90W
0 5 10 15 20 25
Miles
N
Land Status
BLM
National Park Service
USDA Forest Service
Colorado State
Colorado State DOW
White River Resource Area
DENVER
COLORADO